

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 5, please delete second full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 1:

To achieve the above and other aspects in accordance with the purpose of the invention embodied and broadly described herein, the present invention provision is made for a computer system adapted for use in a network. The computer system comprises: a memory containing an item registration application that accepts user input regarding an auction, and a bid monitoring application; and, a processor. The bid monitoring application is configurable by user input to the item registration application. The processor performs operations comprising: setting at least one parameter value for use in precluding submitted bids of one or more bidders by a user identifying the parameter value when registering for an auction using the item registration application; and, automatically precluding submitted bids from a user at another computer system on the network during the auction event that is identified by the set parameter value.

Marked up version indicating the replacements made by Replacement Paragraph 1:

To achieve the above and other aspects in accordance with the purpose of the invention embodied and broadly described herein, the present invention provision is made for a computer system adapted for use in a network. The computer system comprises: a memory containing an item registration application that accepts user input regarding an auction, and a bid monitoring application; and, a processor. The bid monitoring application is configurable by user input to the item registration application. The processor performs operations comprising: setting at least one parameter value for use in precluding submitted bids of one or more bidders by a user identifying the parameter value when registering for an auction using the item registration application; and, automatically precluding submitted bids from [an] a user at another computer system on the network during the auction event that is identified by the set parameter value₂.

Page 8, please delete second full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 2:

Referring to Fig. 2, a server computer system 42 can be a generic type and in this embodiment is an enhanced IBM AS/400 computer system. It represents one suitable type of computer system that can be networked together in accordance with the preferred embodiment. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the mechanisms and apparatus of the present invention apply equally to any computer system that can be networked together with other computer systems. The server computer system 42 includes a processor 50 configured to support the operations of the invention, a main storage memory device 52, such as a random access memory (RAM) 54, read only memory (ROM) 56, input/output (I/O) ports 58 connected to an input device 59, such as a mouse, and an output device 60, such as a display or printer; and, a database 62. Also, provided is at least one system bus 64 that performs system operations and to which the above components are connected for communication with each other. The contents of the RAM 54 may be retrieved from the storage memory device 52. The processor 50 sends and receives information to and from each of the computer's components and performs system operations based upon the requirements of the computer's operating system (OS) 70 and application programs 75 that are installed. It will be recognized that such applications need not be stored in a single computer, but can be distributed among the network.

Marked up version indicating the replacements made by Replacement Paragraph 2:

Referring to Fig. 2, a server computer system 42 can be a generic type and in this embodiment is an enhanced IBM AS/400 computer system. It represents one suitable type of computer system that can be networked together in accordance with the preferred embodiment. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the mechanisms and apparatus of the present invention apply equally to any computer system that can be networked together with other computer systems. The server computer system 42 includes a processor 50 configured to support the operations of the invention, a main storage memory device 52, such as a random access memory (RAM) 54, read only memory (ROM) 56, input/output (I/O) ports 58 connected to an input device 59, such as a mouse, and an output device 60, such as a display or printer; and, a database 62. Also, provided is at least one system bus 64 that performs system operations and to which the above components are connected for communication with each other. The contents of the RAM 54 may be retrieved from the storage memory device 52. The processor 50 sends and

receives information to and from each of the computer's components and performs system operations based upon the requirements of the computer's operating system (OS) 70 and application programs 75 that are installed. It will be recognized that such applications need not be stored in a single computer, but can be distributed among the network.

Page 10, please delete first full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 3:

The database 62 is stored locally but may also be accessed from remote locations in known manners. The database 62 will generally be substantial in size and contains the categorized lists generated by the application server 40. The categorized lists include bidder's membership history as well as bidder's bidding history or other features that the present invention envisions as being useful in terms of allowing the seller to preclude bids. Since these files are readily available by an ISP, the processor can efficiently search the information. Once the application server 40 acquires the necessary seller information, [than] then it is ready to begin monitoring the bidding. In this process the application server 40 may utilize various known auction-monitoring processes. For example, the application server 40 may use known search techniques to search the database. In order to make this determination, the application server 40 cross references the categorized sales and user files.

Marked up version indicating the replacements made by Replacement Paragraph 3:

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Page 11, please delete first full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 4:

Each of the clients includes a computer system that has client applications that are stored in a suitable memory. The application server 40 includes a server computer system 42 having the server applications stored therein. It can be appreciated that any computer can be turned into a client or server by installing appropriate client or server software and connecting the machine to the Internet. There are many Web server software applications that can be used. The client computers can be a variety of computer systems, however, personal computers (PC), a workstation or the like would be typical. A person skilled in the art will recognize that a laptop computer, a hand-held device or the like can also be used. The client computer system includes in essence the same basic hardware as the application server and thus details thereof need not be described and only those used in a description of this invention will be described. It will be appreciated that any computer can be converted into a client or server depending on the kind of software that is installed. The client application process also manages the local resources that the user interacts with such as the monitor, keyboard, processor, and peripherals. The client program also controls operation of the graphical user interface (GUI). A browser program is associated with each client terminal and supports graphical and textual information. The web browser program is a client program that is operable for requesting services (the sending of Web pages or files) from the server 40 and sends a message to a server process program requesting that the server 40 perform a service. Several other suitable Internet browsers are contemplated for supporting protocols and file formats found on the World-Wide Web, such as FTP. At the client terminals, information regarding an auction from the auctioneer server 40 can be displayed. The Application server 40 requests originating from the client terminals send this information. The information communicated can relate to the selected auction subject, a desired price, and the highest possible price in competition for the desired good or service. In this embodiment, the bidding plug-in is activated by a potential bidder within a browser window.

Marked up version indicating the replacements made by Replacement Paragraph 4:

Each of the clients includes a computer system that has client applications that are stored in a suitable memory. The application server 40 includes a server computer system 42 having the

server applications stored therein. It can be appreciated that any computer can be turned into a client or server by installing appropriate client or server software and connecting the machine to the Internet. There are many Web server software applications that can be used. The client computers can be a variety of computer systems, however, personal computers (PC), a workstation or the like would be typical. A person skilled in the art will recognize that a laptop computer, a hand-held device or the like can also be used. The client computer system includes in essence the same basic hardware as the application server and thus details thereof need not be described and only those used in a description of this invention will be described. It will be appreciated that any computer can be converted into a client or server depending on the kind of software that is installed. The client application process also manages the local resources that the user interacts with such as the monitor, keyboard, processor, and peripherals. The client program also controls operation of the graphical user interface (GUI). A browser program is associated with each client terminal and supports graphical and textual information. The web browser program is a client program that is operable for requesting services (the sending of Web pages or files) from the server 40 and sends a message to a server process program requesting that the server 40 perform a service. Several other suitable Internet browsers are contemplated for supporting protocols and file formats found on the World-Wide Web, such as FTP. At the client terminals, information regarding an auction from the auctioneer server 40 can be displayed. The Application server 40 requests originating from the client terminals send this information. The information communicated can relate to the selected auction subject, a desired price, and the highest possible price in competition for the desired good or service. In this embodiment, the bidding plug-in is activated by a potential bidder within a browser window.

Page 13, please delete first full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 5:

The method then proceeds to step 306 whereupon the seller determines whether to register the item with the application server. If the seller does not proceed to register, the "Cancel" button 116 is activated and the item registration method terminates 316. If the seller activates the "OK" button 116 and the seller's client browser will cause the item registration information to be stored locally and as well as stored in appropriate database 62 files at the application server 40. At step 308 it is determined by the ISP processor whether or not there is

an exclusion date. If it is determined that there is no exclusion date then the method 300 proceeds to step 312. If it is determined that there is a date, then such date will be set as a parameter value to update the registration date exclusion column/file of the database at step 310 for subsequent use by the ISP processor in configuring the bid monitoring method to be described. Once this column/file is updated the method proceeds to step 312. As a result, a parameter value is set or established for use in the bid monitoring method that describes which parameter value has the attribute of precluding submitted bids from being considered during the auction should the submitted bid fall after the entered date.

Marked up version indicating the replacements made by Replacement Paragraph 5:

The method then proceeds to step 306 whereupon the seller determines whether to register the item with the application server. If the seller does not proceed to register, the "Cancel" button 116 is activated and the item registration method terminates 316. If the seller activates the "OK" button 116 and the seller's client browser will cause the item registration information to be stored locally and as well as stored in appropriate database 62 files at the application server 40. At step 308 it is determined by the ISP processor whether or not there is an exclusion date. If it is determined that there is no exclusion date then the method 300 proceeds to step 312. If it is determined that there is a date, then such date will be set as a parameter value to update the registration date exclusion column/file of the database at step 310 for subsequent use by the ISP processor in configuring the bid monitoring method to be described. Once this column/file is updated the method proceeds to step 312. As a result, a parameter value is set or established for use in the bid monitoring method that [to be] describes[d] which parameter value has the attribute of precluding submitted bids from being considered during the auction should the submitted bid fall after the entered date.

Page 14, please delete first full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 6:

At step 312, a determination is made whether an exclude by bid amount has been entered for purposes of configuring the bid monitoring method to be described. If the seller has entered no amount during registration then the method proceeds to exit at step 316. If the seller entered an exclusionary amount, then such amount is updated in the update column/file at step 314. As a

result, a parameter value is set or established for use in the bid monitoring method that describes which parameter value has the attribute of precluding submitted bids from being considered during the auction should submitted bids fall below the preselected amount. Once this column/file is updated at step 314 then the method proceeds to exit at step 316. After the item is registered and the item registration parameter values are appropriately saved in database 62 files the item is ready for auctioning. Advantages of the foregoing approaches are that the seller can independently set several parameter values to satisfy the seller's concerns over potentially disrupting bidders. Once the application server 40 has acquired the necessary information then the application server 40 is ready to begin monitoring the information submitted by potential bidders.

Marked up version indicating the replacements made by Replacement Paragraph 6:

At step 312, a determination is made whether an exclude by bid amount has been entered for purposes of configuring the bid monitoring method to be described. If the seller has entered no amount during registration then the method proceeds to exit at step 316. If the seller entered an exclusionary amount, then such amount is updated in the update column/file at step 314. As a result, a parameter value is set or established for use in the bid monitoring method that [to be] describes[d] which parameter value has the attribute of precluding submitted bids from being considered during the auction should submitted bids fall below the preselected amount. Once this column/file is updated at step 314 then the method proceeds to exit at step 316. After the item is registered and the item registration parameter values are appropriately saved in database 62 files the item is ready for auctioning. Advantages of the foregoing approaches are that the seller can independently set several parameter values [independently] to satisfy the seller's concerns over potentially disrupting bidders. Once the application server 40 has acquired the necessary information then the application server 40 is ready to begin monitoring the information submitted by potential bidders.

Page 15, please delete first full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 7:

Reference is now made to Fig. 5 for illustrating the steps of a preferred bid monitoring method 500 conducted by the application processor 50. At step 502, the bid-monitoring program

95 is controlled by an auction monitor. At step 504 the bid monitoring program 95 of the application processor 50 awaits for input to the auction from the bidders. The bidders through their web browser's request information pertaining to an auction from the application server 40. The application server 40 in response serves the requested auction information from its updated database 62 and, in particular, provides a graphical user interface screen (not shown) to the requesting bidders thru the latter's web browsers. Each of the bidders supplies the requested information, such as bidder ID, information regarding the bidder, the date the bidder has been registered as well as initial bid thereby forming a bid file. The method then proceeds from step 504 to step 506. At step 506 the auction application of the ISP processor accepts the bidder's information and determines if the bid is for the particular auction. If the auction manager makes no match, the bid monitoring program 95 terminates at step 516. If, however, at step 506 the bid is determined to be for the particular auction then proceed to step 508.

Marked up version indicating the replacements made by Replacement Paragraph 7:

Reference is now made to Fig. 5 for illustrating the steps of a preferred bid monitoring method 500 conducted by the application processor 50. At step 502, the bid-monitoring program 95 is [running under the] controlled [of] by an auction monitor. At step 504 the bid monitoring [application] program 95 of the application processor 50 awaits for input to the auction from the bidders. The bidders through their web browser's request information pertaining to an auction from the application server 40. The application server 40 in response serves the requested auction information from its updated database 62 and, in particular, provides a graphical user interface screen (not shown) to the requesting bidders thru the latter's web browsers. Each of the bidders supplies the requested information, such as bidder ID, information regarding the bidder, the date the bidder has been registered as well as initial bid thereby forming a bid file. The method then proceeds from step 504 to step 506. At step 506 the auction application of the ISP processor accepts the bidder's information and determines if the bid is for the particular auction. If the auction manager makes no match, the bid monitoring [application] program 95 terminates at step 516. If, however, at step 506 the bid is determined to be for the particular auction then proceed to step 508.

Page 16, please delete first full paragraph and replace with Replacement Paragraph 8:

At step 508 the auction application retrieves the seller's sale file from the database 62. Following the gaining of access, step 510 follows. At step 510, the bid-monitoring program 95 determines if the seller placed a bid entry. If no bid entry has been made then step 518 follows. If a registration date has been entered, the method proceeds to step 512 whereby the entered date is compared to the set parameter of the date exclusion file stored in the database 62 as a result of the item registration method. If the bid date is not accepted, then step 514 follows, whereby at step 514 a message is served by the ISP processor under control of the auction manager to the respective web browser of the affected bidder advising that such bid is not accepted and the reason for it. The method then terminates at step 516. If the bid date is accepted, the method proceeds to step 518. At step 518 the auction manager application retrieves the seller's sale file from the database. At step 518 the bid monitoring application determines if the bidder entered a bid amount. If no bid amount entry has been made, then step 522 follows, whereby the bid is allowed to be placed in the auction by the auction manager of the application server 40. If a bid amount has been entered the method proceeds to step 520, whereby the entered date is compared to the set parameter value of the bid amount exclusion file that has been entered by the item registration method above. If the bid date is not accepted then step 514 follows, whereby a message is served by the application server to the bidder that the bid is not accepted and the reason for it. The bid-monitoring program terminates at step 516. At step 520, if the bid satisfies the parameter value, then step 522 of the bid monitoring program accepts the bid for consideration by the auction manager of the auction program and the bid monitoring process terminates for that particular bid.

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At step 508 the auction application retrieves the seller's sale file from the database 62. Following the gaining of access, step 510 follows. At step 510, the bid-monitoring program 95 determines if the seller placed a bid entry. If no bid entry has been made then step 518 follows. If a registration date has been entered, the method proceeds to step 512 whereby the entered date is compared to the set parameter of the date exclusion file stored in the database 62 as a result of the item registration method. If the bid date is not accepted, then step 514 follows, whereby at

step 514 a message is served by the ISP processor under control of the auction manager to the respective web browser of the affected bidder advising that such bid is not accepted and the reason for it. The method then terminates at step 516. If the bid date is accepted, the method proceeds to step 518. At step 518 the auction manager application retrieves the seller's sale file from the database. At step 518 the bid monitoring application determines if the bidder entered a bid amount. If no bid amount entry has been made, then step 522 follows, whereby the bid is allowed to be placed in the auction by the auction manager of the application server 40. If a bid amount has been entered the method proceeds to step 520, whereby the entered date is compared to the set parameter value of the bid amount exclusion file that has been entered by the item registration method above. If the bid date is not accepted then step 514 follows, whereby a message is served by the application server to the bidder that the bid is not accepted and the reason for it. The bid-monitoring program terminates at step 516. At step 520, if the bid satisfies the parameter value, then step 522 of the bid monitoring program accepts the bid for consideration by the auction manager of the auction program and the bid monitoring process terminates for that particular bid.